

Here state policy or the assumed advantage of physical vigor overrode the motives of monogamy which prevailed in the surrounding civilization. In Plautus's comedy *Stichus* a case is referred to in which two slaves have one woman (wife). Roman epitaphs are cited in which two men jointly celebrate a common wife.¹ These are cases of return to an abandoned usage, under the stress of poverty. An emigrating group must generally have contained more men than women. Polyandry was very sure to occur. It is said that immigrant groups can be found in the United States in which polyandry exists, being produced in this way. Many aboriginal tribes in India, amongst which the Todas are the best known, practice polyandry. Przewalsky says that in Tibet polyandry is attributed to a tax on houses in which there is a married woman.² Primarily it is due to poverty and a hard habitat. Two, three, or even four brothers have a wife in common. The Russian traveler adds that rich men have a wife each, or even two, and Cunningham³ confirms this; that is to say, then, that the number of wives follows directly the economic

power of the man. The case only illustrates the close inter-dependence of capital and marriage which we shall find at every stage. In the days of Venetian glory " of ten four or five men united to maintain one woman, in whose house they met daily to laugh, eat, and jest, without a shadow of jealousy. If, however, the cleverness of a woman brought a young patrician into a mesalliance, the state promptly dissolved the bond in its own way." ⁴ The polyandry of the Nairs, on the Malabar coast, has been cited to prove that polyandry is not due to poverty. It is due to the unwillingness to subdivide the property of the family, which is of the modified mother-family form, all the immediate kin holding together and keeping the property undivided. Subdivisions of this people differ as to details of the custom and it is now becoming obsolete. Of course "moral doctrines" have been invented to bring the custom under a broad principle.⁵ It appears, however, that the husbands, in the Nair system, are

¹ Pellison, *Roman Life in Pliny's Time*, 100.

* *Third Journey* (russ[^] 259. * Molmenti, *Venezia nella Vita Privata* [^] 386.

⁸ *Ladak*, 306. ?
Madras Gov. Mus [^] III, 227.